

Klotz Starts at Nuclear Arms Agency

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Retired Lt. Gen. Frank G. Klotz was sworn in as the new head of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) on April 17.

Klotz, who was approved by the Senate on April 8, takes over at a troubled time for the agency, which oversees the production and maintenance of U.S. nuclear warheads. In March, a congressionally mandated panel found that the NNSA, a semiautonomous part of the Energy Department, has “failed” in its mission to effectively oversee U.S. nuclear weapons operations.

The Senate Armed Services Committee approved Klotz’s nomination in January, after the White House chose him for the post in August. He replaces acting administrator Bruce Held, who will return to his position as associate deputy secretary. The NNSA has not had a permanent administrator since Thomas D’Agostino stepped down in January 2013.

Klotz was commander of Air Force Global Strike Command from 2009 to 2011 and served from 2001 to 2003 as the director for nuclear policy and arms control on the National Security Council, where he represented the Bush administration in talks that led to the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty. Earlier in his career, he served as the defense attaché at the U.S. embassy in Moscow.

Klotz will have to deal with calls for “drastic reforms” at the NNSA to address “systemic” management problems, according to preliminary findings of the Advisory Panel on the Governance of the Nuclear Security Enterprise.

“The unmistakable conclusion of our fact-finding is that, as implemented, the ‘NNSA experiment’ involving creation of a semiautonomous organization has failed,” former Lockheed Martin Chairman and CEO Norm Augustine and retired Adm. Richard Mies, the co-chairmen of the bipartisan panel, told the House Armed Services Committee on March 26 in a written summary of the panel’s initial conclusions. The panel’s final report is expected this summer.

Past proposals for NNSA reforms have included eliminating Energy Department oversight, increasing contractor independence, boosting the department’s oversight, and placing the agency under Pentagon control.

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